

§ 17.73

a debt is paid in installments and interest is collected, installment payments will first be applied to the payment of accrued interest and then to principal unless a different rule is prescribed by statute, contract or regulation. Prejudgment interest shall not be demanded or collected on civil penalty and forfeiture claim unless the statute under which the claim arises authorizes the collection of such interest.

(f) *Omission not a defense.* Failure of HUD to comply with any standard prescribed in 4 CFR parts 101 through 105 or in this subpart shall not be available as a defense to any debtor.

[36 FR 24427, Dec. 22, 1971. Redesignated and amended at 49 FR 32349, 32350, Aug. 14, 1984; 59 FR 34580, July 6, 1994]

§ 17.73 Standards for compromise of claims.

(a) *Compromise offer.* An offer to compromise may be accepted: (1) If there is real doubt concerning the Department's ability to prove its case in court for the full amount claimed; (2) if the cost of collecting the claim does not justify the enforced collection of the full amount; (3) if in connection with statutory penalties of forfeitures established as an aid to enforcement and to compel compliance, the Department's enforcement policy will be adequately served by acceptance of the sum to be agreed upon, or (4) for other reasons deemed valid by the Assistant Secretary for Administration (or other designee) and made a part of the claim record.

(b) *Documentary evidence of compromise.* No compromise of a claim shall be final or binding on the Department unless it is in writing and signed by the appropriate officer who has authority to compromise the claim pursuant to this subpart.

§ 17.74 Standards for suspension or termination of collection action.

(a) *Suspension of collection action.* Collection action shall be suspended temporarily on a claim when the debtor cannot be located after diligent effort but there is reason to believe that future collection action may be sufficiently productive to justify periodic review and action on the claim, having consideration for its size and the

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amount which may be realized. Collection action may be suspended temporarily on a claim when the debtor owns no substantial equity in realty and is presently unable to make payment on the Department's claim or effect a compromise, but his future prospects justify retention of the claim for periodic review and action and (1) the applicable statute of limitations has been tolled or started anew or (2) future collection can be effected by offset notwithstanding the statute of limitations. Suspension as to a particular debtor should not defer the early liquidation of security for the debt.

(b) *Termination of collection action.* Collection action may be terminated and the Department file closed for the following reasons: (1) No substantial amount can be collected; (2) the debtor cannot be located; (3) the cost will exceed recovery; (4) the claim is legally without merit; or (5) the claim cannot be substantiated by evidence.

§ 17.75 Referral to GAO or Justice Department.

(a) *Claims referred.* Claims which cannot be collected, compromised, or terminated in accordance with 4 CFR parts 101 to 105 will be referred to the General Accounting Office in accordance with 31 U.S.C. 71 or to the Department of Justice if this Department has been granted an exception from referrals to the General Accounting Office. Also, if there is doubt as to whether collection action should be suspended or terminated on a claim, the claim may be referred to the General Accounting Office for advice. When recovery of a judgment is prerequisite to imposition of administrative sanctions, the claim may be referred to the Justice Department for litigation even though termination of collection activity might otherwise be considered.

(b) *Prompt referral.* Such referrals shall be made as early as possible consistent with aggressive collection action, and in any event, well within the statute of limitations for bringing suit against the debtor.